

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for enabling exchange of electronic data between market participants, the method comprising:

receiving, from a first market participant located in a first jurisdiction, a configuration for one or more business rules, wherein each business rule is applicable to a specific second market participant located in a second jurisdiction;

receiving electronic data from the first market participant in a first format representing at least one business transaction that includes a request business transaction portion and an expected related response business transaction portion;

validating the electronic data representing the business transaction to ensure that the electronic data representing the business transaction includes a proper structure;

based on the validating, if the electronic data representing the business transaction does not include the proper structure, generating negative validation results, discontinuing processing of the electronic data representing the business transaction, and communicating to the first market participant receipt of the electronic data representing the business transaction and negative validation results of the electronic data representing the business transaction;

based on the validating, if the business transaction includes a proper structure, communicating to the first market participant receipt of the electronic data representing the business transaction and positive validation results of the electronic data representing the business transaction;

mapping, by a computer, the electronic data representing the business transaction from the first format to a standard format;

communicating electronic data representing the request business transaction portion to the second market participant;

receiving electronic data representing the expected related response business transaction from the second market participant;

matching the electronic data representing the expected related response business transaction portion received from the second market participant with the electronic data representing the request business transaction portion;

determining whether the electronic data representing the business transaction satisfies at least one configurable business rule, wherein the configurable business rule defines relationship information between the electronic data representing the request business transaction portion and electronic data representing the expected related response business transaction portion, the relationship data establishing at least one of: (1) an acceptable amount of time between receiving a request business transaction portion and receiving an expected related response business transaction portion, (2) the jurisdictions of the first market participant and the second market participant, and (3) policies associated with the first market participant and the second market participant;

establishing electronic data representing a business transaction based on the determination of whether the electronic data representing the business transaction satisfies the configurable business rule;

storing the electronic data for retrieval and analysis;

monitoring a sequence of stored electronic data representing a series of related business transactions between the first market participant and the second market participant;

tracking a status of the electronic data representing the business transaction and the sequence of electronic data representing the series of related business transactions between the first market participant and the second market participant; and

displaying the results of the tracking to at least one of the first market participant and the second market participant.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the configurable business rule is configured based on at least one of a jurisdiction associated with the electronic data representing the business transaction, a time relationship between the electronic data representing the request business transaction portion and the electronic data representing the expected related response business transaction portion, and a business event associated with the electronic data representing the business transaction.
4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising processing electronic data representing business transactions having different formats.
5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising sending a message indicating that the electronic data representing the business transaction does not satisfy a configurable business rule.
6. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for enabling exchange of electronic data between market participants, comprising:
 - a memory; and
 - a processor coupled to the memory, wherein the processor is configured to:
 - receive, from a first market participant located in a first jurisdiction, a configuration for one or more business rules, wherein each business rule is applicable to a specific second market participant located in a second jurisdiction,
 - receive electronic data from the first market participant in a first format representing at least one business transaction that includes a request business transaction portion and an expected related response business transaction portion,
 - validate the electronic data representing the business transaction to ensure that the electronic data representing the business transaction includes a proper structure,
 - based on the validation, if the electronic data representing the business transaction does not include the proper structure, generate negative validation results, discontinue

processing of the electronic data representing the business transaction, and communicate to the first market participant receipt of the electronic data representing the business transaction and negative validation results of the electronic data representing the business transaction,

based on the validation, if the business transaction includes a proper structure,
communicate to the first market participant receipt of the electronic data representing the business transaction and positive validation results of the electronic data representing the business transaction,

map the electronic data from the first format to a standard format,
communicate electronic data representing the request business transaction portion to the second market participant,

receive electronic data representing the expected related response business transaction from the second market participant,

match the electronic data representing the expected related response business transaction portion received from the second market participant with the electronic data representing the request business transaction portion,

determine whether the electronic data representing the business transaction satisfies at least one configurable business rule, wherein the configurable business rule defines relationship information between the electronic data representing the request business transaction portion and electronic data representing the expected related response business transaction portion,

establish electronic data representing a subsequent business transaction based on the determination of whether the electronic data representing the business transaction satisfies the configurable business rule,

store the electronic data for retrieval and analysis,

monitor a sequence of stored electronic data representing a series of related business transactions between the first market participant and the second market participant,

track a status of the electronic data representing the business transaction and the subsequent business transaction and the sequence of electronic data representing a series of related business transactions between the first market participant and the second market participant, and

display the results of the tracking to at least one of the first market participant and the second market participant.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the configurable business rule is configured based on at least one of a jurisdiction associated with the electronic data representing the business transaction, a time relationship between the electronic data representing the request business transaction portion and the electronic data representing the expected related response business transaction portion, and a business event associated with the electronic data representing the business transaction.

9. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the processor is further configured to process electronic data representing business transactions having different formats.

10. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the processor is further configured to send a message indicating that the electronic data representing the business transaction does not satisfy a configurable business rule.

11. (Currently Amended) An article comprising a computer-readable medium that stores executable instructions for enabling exchange of electronic data between market participants and causes a computer system to:

receive, from a first market participant located in a first jurisdiction, a configuration for one or more business rules, wherein each business rule is applicable to a specific second market participant located in a second jurisdiction;

receive electronic data from the first market participant in a first format representing at least one business transaction that includes a request business transaction portion and an expected related response business transaction portion;

validate the electronic data representing the business transaction to ensure that the electronic data representing the business transaction includes a proper structure;

based on the validation, if the electronic data representing the business transaction does not include the proper structure, generate negative validation results, discontinue processing of the electronic data representing the business transaction, and communicate to the first market participant receipt of the electronic data representing the business transaction and negative validation results of the electronic data representing the business transaction;

based on the validation, if the business transaction includes a proper structure, communicate to the first market participant receipt of the electronic data representing the business transaction and positive validation results of the electronic data representing the business transaction;

map the electronic data from the first format to a standard format;

communicate electronic data representing the request business transaction portion to the second market participant;

receive electronic data representing the expected related response business transaction from the second market participant;

match the electronic data representing the expected related response business transaction portion received from the second market participant with the electronic data representing the request business transaction portion;

determine whether the electronic data representing the business transaction satisfies at least one configurable business rule, wherein the configurable business rule defines relationship information between the electronic data representing the request business transaction portion and

electronic data representing the expected related response business transaction portion, the relationship data establishing at least one of: (1) an acceptable amount of time between receiving a request business transaction portion and receiving an expected related response business transaction portion, (2) the jurisdictions of the first market participant and the second market participant, and (3) policies associated with the first market participant and the second market participant;

establish electronic data representing a subsequent business transaction based on the determination of whether the electronic data representing the business transaction satisfies the configurable business rule;

store the electronic data for retrieval and analysis;

monitor a sequence of stored electronic data representing a series of related business transactions between the first market participant and the second market participant;

track a status of the electronic data representing the business transaction and the subsequent business transaction and the sequence of electronic data representing a series of related business transactions between the first market participant and the second market participant; and

display the results of the tracking to at least one of the first market participant and the second market participant.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Previously Presented) The article of claim 11, wherein the configurable business rule is configured based on at least one of a jurisdiction associated with the electronic data representing the business transaction, a time relationship between the electronic data representing the request business transaction portion and the electronic data representing the expected related response business transaction portion, and a business event associated with the electronic data representing the business transaction.

14. (Previously Presented) The article of claim 11, further comprising instructions for causing the computer to process electronic data representing business transactions having different formats.

15. (Previously Presented) The article of claim 11, further comprising instructions for causing the computer to send a message indicating that the electronic data representing the business transaction does not satisfy a configurable business rule.

16-34. (Canceled)

35. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 6 further comprising a second processor that is configured to access the processor.

36. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

receiving electronically, at a computer system, a first transaction record from an organization located in a first jurisdiction, the first transaction record being received according to a first protocol, and the first transaction record having a first format and including first transaction data stored in the first format and describing a completed first transaction between the organization and a customer located in a second jurisdiction;

converting, by the computer system, the first transaction data from the first format into a second format;

accessing, by the computer system and based on information in the first transaction record, a first business rule configured by the organization and describing a second transaction expected to be completed between the organization and the customer in response to the completed first transaction, the first business rule including an acceptable time period in which the second transaction is expected to be completed;

receiving, by the computer system, a second transaction record from the organization including second transaction data describing completion of the second transaction;

processing, by the computer system, the second transaction record using the first business rule;

determining, by the computer system, whether the second transaction was completed during the acceptable time period;

storing, by the computer system, at least some portions of the first transaction record and the second transaction record; and

displaying the results of the processing and storing, by the computer system, to at least one of the organization and the customer.

37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36 wherein:

receiving the second transaction record from the organization comprises receiving the second transaction record according to the first protocol, with the second transaction record having the first format and including the second transaction data stored in the first format and describing the completed second transaction between the organization and the customer; and processing the second transaction record comprises:

converting the second transaction data from the first format into the second format;

determining in an automated manner whether the first business rule is satisfied by the second transaction data;

accessing, when the first business rule is satisfied, a second business rule configured by the organization and describing a third transaction expected to be completed between the organization and the customer in response to the completed second transaction; and

receiving a third transaction record from the organization including third transaction data describing completion of the third transaction.

38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 37 further comprising repeating the operations of converting, determining, accessing, and receiving from claim 37 for a series of

successive transactions between the organization and the customer, each of the series of successive transactions between the organization and the customer identifying a succeeding transaction in the series through a business rule.

39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36 wherein:

receiving the second transaction record from the organization comprises receiving the second transaction record according to the first protocol, with the second transaction record having the first format and including the second transaction data stored in the first format and describing the completed second transaction between the organization and the customer; and

processing the second transaction record comprises:

converting the second transaction data from the first format into the second format;

determining whether the first business rule is satisfied by the second transaction data; and

informing the organization of whether the first business rule is satisfied.

40. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 39 wherein determining whether the first business rule is satisfied comprises determining whether the second transaction was completed within a time period required by the first business rule.

41. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36 further comprising:

receiving a third transaction record from the organization, the third transaction record being received according to the first protocol, and the third transaction record having the first format and including third transaction data stored in the first format and describing a completed third transaction between the organization and the customer;

converting the third transaction data from the first format into the second format;

determining that the third transaction is an unexpected transaction, an unexpected transaction being a transaction that is expected to succeed a given transaction that has not been completed; and

informing the organization that the third transaction is an unexpected transaction.

42. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36 further comprising:

receiving a third transaction record from another organization, the third transaction record being received according to another protocol, and the third transaction record having another format and including third transaction data stored in the other format and describing a completed third transaction between the other organization and another customer;

converting the third transaction data from the other format into the second format;

accessing, based on information in the third transaction record, a third business rule configured by the other organization and describing a fourth transaction expected to be completed between the other organization and the other customer in response to the completed third transaction; and

receiving a fourth transaction record from the other organization including fourth transaction data describing completion of the fourth transaction.

43. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 42 wherein receiving the fourth transaction record comprises receiving the fourth transaction record according to the other protocol, with the fourth transaction record including the fourth transaction data stored in the other format and describing a completed fourth transaction between the other organization and the other customer, the method further comprising:

converting the fourth transaction data from the other format into the second format;

determining, by the computer system, whether the third business rule is satisfied by the fourth transaction data;

accessing, based on whether the third business rule is satisfied, a fourth business rule configured by the other organization and describing a fifth transaction expected to be completed

between the other organization and the other customer in response to the completed fourth transaction; and

receiving a fifth transaction record from the other organization including fifth transaction data describing completion of the fifth transaction.

44. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 43 further comprising repeating the operations of converting, determining, accessing, and receiving from claim 43 for a series of successive transactions between the other organization and the other customer, each of the series of successive transactions between the other organization and the other customer identifying a succeeding transaction in the series through a business rule.

45. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38 further comprising:

receiving a fourth transaction record from another organization, the fourth transaction record being received according to another protocol, and the fourth transaction record having another format and including fourth transaction data stored in the other format and describing a completed fourth transaction between the other organization and other customer;

converting the fourth transaction data from the another format into the second format;

accessing, based on information in the fourth transaction record, a fourth business rule configured by the other organization and describing a fifth transaction expected to be completed between the other organization and the other customer in response to the completed fourth transaction;

receiving a fifth transaction record from the other organization including fifth transaction data describing completion of the fifth transaction;

receiving the fifth transaction record from the other organization, the fifth transaction record being received according to the other protocol, and the fifth transaction record having the other format and including the fifth transaction data stored in the other format and describing a completed fifth transaction between the other organization and the other customer;

converting the fifth transaction data from the other format into the second format;

determining, by the computer system, whether the fourth business rule is satisfied by the fifth transaction data;

accessing, based on whether the fourth business rule is satisfied, a fifth business rule configured by the other organization and describing a sixth transaction expected to be completed between the other organization and the other customer in response to the completed fifth transaction;

receiving a sixth transaction record from the other organization including sixth transaction data describing completion of the sixth transaction; and

repeating the operations of receiving a transaction record of an expected transaction, converting a format of the transaction record of the expected transaction to a second format, determining whether the transaction record of the expected transaction satisfies a business rule, accessing a further business rule describing a further transaction expected to be completed, and receiving a transaction record for the further expected transaction, for a series of successive transactions between the other organization and the other customer, each of the series of successive transactions between the other organization and the other customer identifying a succeeding transaction in the series through a business rule.

46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38 further comprising receiving from the organization an update for the first business rule.

47. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38 further comprising providing the organization electronic access to transaction records for the series of successive transactions.

48. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38 wherein:
the organization includes a first energy supplier, and
the other organization includes a second energy supplier.

49. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38 wherein:

the organization includes a utility organization, and
the other organization includes an energy supplier.

50. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 48 wherein:
the completed first transaction is a bill for energy supplied to a customer by the first
energy supplier; and
the second transaction is an expected payment of the bill by the customer.

51. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 48 wherein:
the completed first transaction is an enrollment by a customer to receive energy from the
first energy supplier; and
the second transaction is an expected response from the customer to the enrollment;

52. (New) The apparatus of claim 6 wherein the relationship data establishes at least one of:
(1) an acceptable amount of time between receiving a request business transaction portion and
receiving an expected related response business transaction portion, (2) the jurisdictions of the
first market participant and the second market participant, and (3) policies associated with the
first market participant and the second market participant.